



Newsletter of the Utah State Library for the Blind and Disabled

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This newsletter is available in Braille, on cassette, or via email by contacting the library, or on the Utah State Library Division website at <http://blindlibrary.utah.gov> then click on See Note Newsletter

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Digital Transition Continues

The Utah State Library is completing the pre-launch test of the new digital talking book machines. Generally the 300 machines tested by library users performed well and people were excited and delighted by the machine's capabilities. Users were disappointed that there were only about 50 titles available in the test phase.

The next step is to offer machines to all the library's readers. This issue of the See Note will describe the two models being offered that will eventually, over several years, replace the C1 cassette player.

The library should begin to receive more machines this Fall to issue to readers. Hopefully this will coincide with the arrival of more digital books to circulate as well.



The digital machine pictured here is the standard digital model. It is smaller in size and considerably lighter in weight (only about 2 lbs.) than the C1 cassette player. It is dark gray in color to create visual contrast between the background of the case and the colors of the control buttons. If no book cartridge is inserted in the machine, pressing a control

button informs the user of the control's function.

The Rewind, Play, and Fast Forward are close to the front of the player. The square green Play button controls both starting and stopping the playback of the book. The reader can control the rate of Rewind and Fast Forward by pressing these controls once or several times.

The circular red button is the Power control. The white, moon shaped Sleep button will turn the player off after 15 minutes if pressed once, 30 minutes if pressed twice, etc.. The yellow Volume controls are shaped like arrows pointing up and down.

Toward the back of the machine are Tone and Speed controls shaped like the Volume buttons. The reader can adjust the Tone and control the Speed from 50% to 300% of normal, with no change in pitch.

The white band along the front of the player is a pull-out handle like the one on the C1 cassette player. Above the handle is the opening for the digital talking book cartridge. On the right side of the machine is a headphone jack and a USB port for patron downloading and for the use of library repair workers to test machines and diagnose problems in need of repair.

The standard model is recommended for most readers. It is a great improvement over the cassette player in many respects. Users of the pre-launch machines have been very pleased with the sound quality of the digital machines. Digital players contain a rechargeable battery like the cassette player, but a fully charged battery in the digital machine lasts 27 hours rather than 5 or 6 hours in the cassette player.

The advanced model will also be available to readers. It is the same size and contains all the controls of the standard model, plus five more controls: Info, Previous, Menu, Next, and Mark. These controls allow the reader to more easily navigate within a book and to set and find bookmarks.



The library is currently compiling a waiting list for these machines. Please check whether you would like a Standard or Advanced model on the Reader Response Sheet.

You may also telephone the library or email the library (blind@utah.gov) to request a machine.

Veterans have priority in the assignment of machines. Please also indicate on the Reader Response Sheet if you are a veteran of the United States Armed Services.

Wyoming patrons, to request a digital machine, please contact the local office of Wyoming Services for the Visually Impaired that provided the cassette player to you.

Questions about the Transition



Q: Do I need to return my cassette player when I get the digital player?

A: No. Most readers will want both machines until a sufficient collection of digital books can be produced.

Q: How long will I have the old cassette player?

A: Probably three years or more.

Q: How long will I wait for a new digital player?

A: After your name goes on the waiting list, it could be up to a year or more before you get a digital player.

If you have more than one cassette player, you will not receive a digital machine

Q: How many titles will be available for the new digital player?

A: Before the end of 2010, the library hopes to have about 20,000 titles in the new Digital Book (DB) format. This compares to over 60,000 in the Recorded Cassette (RC) format.

Q: How many digital books can be checked out?

A: Initially a patron will be limited to a maximum of 3 digital books at a time. As the collection grows, this limit may increase. Patrons can still check out a total of up to 20 books at a time by combining DBs and RCs.

Q: How will I know when I'm getting the digital player?

A: It will arrive one day in the mail. There is no way to pre-notify you of its arrival.

Q: What if I don't want to request a digital player now?

A: You will not receive a digital player automatically. You must request one. The sooner you request one, the sooner you can start to enjoy digital books as easily as you do cassette books.

Q: If I am already using BARD and a Victor Reader Stream, do I want a library digital player?

A: The library's machine is another option. You can listen to digital books without access to a computer and the internet.

Q: What is the cost?

A: There is no cost. The digital machine is on loan, like the cassette player.

Volunteer Corner

Volunteers are important to the launch of the new Digital Talking Book

The Utah State Library is beginning to implement a new digital talking book system that will eventually replace the cassette players used by our patrons for nearly 40 years. An entire book is contained on a single cartridge which is slightly smaller than a cassette tape. In addition to cartridge format audio books, patrons can sign up for the BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) program to download digital books.

What does this new format change mean to you as a volunteer?

Recently, our volunteer book inspectors received training to learn the process of inspecting the new digital book cartridges. They also reviewed the process for cassette books because the library will circulate books in both formats for several years to come.

Three years ago the Radio Reading Service switched from analog recording to digital recording. A year and a half later, the book recording program went digital. This was done in preparation for the new digital talking book system.

Patrons of the library will learn more about the digital players through actively enjoying the new technology. Volunteers may be asked to modify their work and procedures to accommodate the new technology.

Volunteers of today, like those 40 years ago when cassette books were introduced, have a new technology sure to improve library service to the blind and disabled. Thank you for your help and flexibility during the transition to the new digital talking book format.